

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 27, 2004

The Honorable Donald L. Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Porter Goss  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Mr. Secretary and Director Goss:

We seek answers to questions we have about recent press reports describing the disappearance of some 380 tons of high explosives from the al-Qaqaa Iraqi military facility. Obviously, the prospect of that much explosive material falling into the hands of Iraqi insurgents or others who would harm our troops and Iraqi citizens is cause for concern. What is more disturbing is the reporting that the United States government was informed about the location of the material by international inspectors and that our forces may have had the chance to search and secure the facility in time to prevent the theft of this material.

Accordingly, please answer the following questions:

- Were the Department of Defense, U.S. military forces, or the Central Intelligence Agency aware before the March 2003 military invasion of Iraq that highly explosive materials such as HMX and RDX and/or ammunition were cached at the al-Qaqaa facility?
- Press reports indicated that 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division troops fought with Iraqi forces at the facility and then occupied the site. If this report is accurate, what effort, if any, was made by U.S. forces to secure the al-Qaqaa facility? What was done to inspect and inventory the contents of the facility, and when was such action taken?

- At what point in time did our forces in Iraq learn that the al-Qaqaa facility had been looted? What effort, if any, did our military forces, the Iraq Survey Group, or the Coalition Provisional Authority undertake to locate and retrieve the missing explosives? To what extent were they successful?
- Weapons experts have noted that the removal of so many tons of explosives would pose significant logistical challenges. By some accounts, dozens of trucks would have been needed to carry off this much material. To what extent, if any, was increased vehicular traffic noted that, in retrospect, might be consistent with the removal of material from the facility? If such increased traffic was detected, what was done in response?
- Is there any evidence that any bombings or IED attacks conducted in Iraq since March 2003 against American forces or Iraqis have employed these materials?
- We have been told during past visits to Iraq that there are many weapons and ammunition storage sites throughout the country. Has any American official spoken with the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure that there are no other such sites at which similarly dangerous explosive material might still be located and unsecured?
- Have all other existing caches of highly explosive materials in Iraq been inventoried and secured by U.S. forces?

We believe we must do everything in our power to protect our troops in Iraq. If we can locate any of these explosives and prevent their use against our forces now, we owe it to our men and women in uniform to do what we can. By the same token, if the theft of this material could have been prevented, then there may be valuable lessons to learn that could have application to some of the many other military storage sites in Iraq.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this letter. We look forward to your reply in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Ike Skelton  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services



Jane Harman  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Select Committee  
on Intelligence